



Honor Your Mother

Topic

Mother's Day

Grade Level(s)

All

Goals for the Lesson/Activity

Students will

- Gain a deeper understanding of the mitzvah of *Kibbud Av v'Em* (Honoring one's mother and father)
- Understand the connection between *Kibbud Av v'Em* and Mother's Day
- Show appreciation for their mothers

Materials needed

- Assorted colored papers and card stock
- Markers, Pens, Pencils, etc.
- Copies of the Mother's Day Hebrew vocabulary sheet from JTeach.org; printed onto different colored papers
- Glue
- Fun designs to glue onto cards
- Stickers

Background for Teachers

The American holiday of Mother's Day has a strong connection to the values espoused in the Torah. Twice, the Torah commands that we honor our parents, once during the giving of the Torah on *Har Sinai* (Mount Sinai) and once when Moshe recounts the giving of the Torah.

כְּבֹד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוֹן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ
(שמות כ: יב)

Honor your father and your mother in order that your days will be long on the earth that 'ה' your God gives to you. (Shemot 20:12)

כְּבֹד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר צֻוֵּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוֹן יָמֶיךָ וְלִמְעַן יִיטֵב לָךְ עַל
הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ (דברים ה: טז)



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Honor your father and your mother as 'ה your God commanded you in order that your days will be long and in order that it will be good for you on the earth that 'ה your God gives to you. (Devarim 5:16)

In the middle of these two commands comes a command to hold one's parents in awe.

אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבָּתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (ויקרא יט:ג)

A person holds one's father and mother in awe and they will guard my Shabbat. I am 'ה your God. (Vayikra 19:3)

While the Torah does not explicitly say how one should honor and revere one's parents, Mother's Day gives us the opportunity to demonstrate how we honor, revere, and love the different maternal figures in our lives.

Description of Activities

Activity #1: Discussion

Spend time with your students reviewing some of the women portrayed in the *Tanach* (Bible) and rabbinic literature and the positive characteristics that made them role models. Some examples might include:

- ❖ Sarah – *Hachnasat Orchim* (Hospitality, Bereshit 18:1-8)
- ❖ Rebecca – *Chesed* (Kindness, Bereshit 24:10-27)
- ❖ Rachel – *Yafet To'ar* (Beauty, Bereshit 19:17)
- ❖ Leah – *Poriyut* (Fertility, Bereshit 19:32-35, 20:15-17)
- ❖ Shifra and Puah – *Ometz Lev* (Courage, Shemot 1:15-21)
- ❖ Deborah – *Tzedek* (Justice, Shoftim 4:4-5)
- ❖ Miriam – *Manhigut* (Leadership, Shemot 2:1-9, 15:20-21)
- ❖ Esther – *Ometz Lev* (Courage, Megillat Esther 4:15-5:8)
- ❖ Ruth – *Ne'emanut* (Loyalty/Commitment, Megillat Ruth 1:1-22)
- ❖ Bruriah – *Chochma* (Wisdom, e.g. Tractate Pesachim 62b)

Ask students to make connections between these women and the traits they see in their own mothers and additional important women in their lives.



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For example: Just as Sarah demonstrated *Hachnasat Orchim* when strangers came to her tent, my mom ...

Activity #2: Creating Meaningful Mother's Day Cards

Invite students to write poetry or prose based on the connections that they made during the discussion. This writing will be the starting point for the meaningful cards they will create.

Make available a variety of art supplies and let the students create beautiful cards for their moms and other significant women in their lives. Be sure to encourage them to include their original poetry/prose and other references to the Jewish women discussed earlier in the lesson. They can also cut out Hebrew phrases from the Mother's Day Hebrew vocabulary sheet and collage the words onto their cards.

For Example:

Thank You – תודה

- i. Happy Mother's Day – יום האם שמח
- ii. I love you (from a boy) – אני אוהב אותך
- iii. I love you (from a girl) – אני אוהבת אותך

Please note: In addition to cards, students' answers may be made into a "crown of a good name" hanger that rests on the back of the student's mother's chair. Write the poetry on the crown, and then embellish with sequins and glitter. Use a beautiful ribbon to suspend the crown from the back of mom's chair.

Differentiation Options

Knowing that students learn in a variety of ways and modalities, the following options are provided to adjust the above lesson to meet the unique needs of your learners.

For learners who need extension opportunities

Suggest that students look up *pesukim* (verses)/stories from the Torah that they feel connect to their mothers and include them (copy the verse, refer to the portion, or paraphrase the story) in their cards.